

Washington State Conservation Commission

FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2016

[HTTP://OFP.SCC.WA.GOV/](http://ofp.scc.wa.gov/)



Recent Oregon report examines working lands



A recent report - PDF available for download here [<http://goo.gl/FDCWZH>] - details work that has resulted in a working lands data bank GIS portal.

Data Bank is accessible here: <http://tplgis.org/OR/WorkingLands/>

In partnership with the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts and partners throughout the state, The Trust for Public Land undertook the Oregon Working Lands Data Bank project in order to provide accessible Geographic Information System (GIS)-based data on changes to working lands in Oregon. The Data Bank is intended to identify factors influencing the conversion of working lands and bring to light opportunities to protect and enhance working lands.



This report is based on extensive review of publicly-available data and literature; consultation with local partners; meetings with a 37-member Advisory Committee for the project made up of stakeholders representing farm, ranch, and timber communities, public agencies, and land trusts; and interviews with agricultural and forest landowners throughout Oregon.

Report: U.S. Farmland Ownership, Tenure, and Transfer

A recent USDA Economic Research Service study examines U.S. farmland ownership and tenure, how land is acquired and transferred, the characteristics of land rental agreements, and landlord involvement in rented farmland operations.

Report page: <http://goo.gl/hIxL75>

Farmland ownership, tenure, and transfer have important implications for land accessibility, particularly for young and beginning farmers. The advanced age of many farmers raises questions about how land will be transferred to the next generation of agricultural landowners. Despite the significance of these issues, a number of information gaps remain. For example, to what degree are non-operator landlords involved in the farm sector, what barriers exist to accessing land in the rental market, and do operators and non-operators plan to transfer their land (when not through sales) through different channels, such as wills, trusts, or as gifts?



What Did the Study Find?

- Approximately 39 percent of the 911 million acres of farmland in the contiguous 48 States is rented.
- Smaller family farm operators are more likely to be full owners of land they operate.
- The majority of rented acres are owned by non-operator landlords.
- Retired farmers make up 38 percent of non-operator landlords.
- Landlord input to farm management decisions on rented land varies by type of decision.
- Most tenants rent land from multiple landlords.
- Most landlords have long-term relationships with their tenants, suggesting that access to new land through renting may be limited.
- Non-operator landlords are more likely than operator landowners to acquire land through inheritance.
- Ten percent (93 million acres) of all land in farms is expected to be transferred during 2015-2019, most of which (6 percent) will change hands through gifts, trusts, or wills.

Stay in contact and sign up for the OFP-Newsletter!

Email frequency is once a month

Sign up on the web at: <http://ofp.scc.wa.gov>

Stealth potato virus threatens industry

WSU Blog Post - By Sylvia Kantor

PULLMAN, Wash. – The next time you sink your teeth into a hot, crispy french fry, consider the threats that stand between you and this iconic food. Newly emerged viruses threaten the U.S. potato industry, including potatoes grown in Washington.

More than 85 percent of potatoes from the state's Columbia Basin feed our french fry habit. As demand for fries continues to rise, the pressure on U.S. growers to produce perfect potatoes is intensifying.

Several newly evolved strains of the disease known as potato virus Y, or PVY, can render potatoes unmarketable and reduce crop yield. What's worse is the new viruses are particularly difficult to detect with the naked eye. Read more here: <http://goo.gl/Ew1a4w>



Horses hit hard with West Nile virus in NE Washington

By Mike Louisell - WSDA Communications

Ten confirmed cases of West Nile Virus in horses have been detected so far this year in Washington, with the most recent cases in Stevens, Pend Oreille, Lincoln and Spokane counties. Warmer weather seems to have prompted the spread of mosquitoes carrying the West Nile virus into these northeastern parts of Washington.

The first case of the year came in late July involving a horse in Grandview, Yakima County, the state's traditional hotspot for the West Nile virus. Since then, the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (WADDL), operated by Washington State University in Pullman, has reported nine additional horse cases to WSDA.

Read more here: <http://wastatedeptag.blogspot.com/>



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

New USDA App Protects Cattle from Heat Stress

By Jan Suszkiw - August 29, 2016

USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has launched a new smartphone application ("app") that forecasts conditions triggering heat stress in cattle. The app is available at both [Google Play](#) and the [App Store](#).

Compatible with Android and Apple mobile phone, the app issues forecasts one to seven days in advance of extreme heat conditions, along with recommended actions that can protect animals before and during a heat-stress event. In some cattle, distress and discomfort from prolonged exposure to extreme heat cause diminished appetite, reduced growth or weight gain, greater susceptibility to disease and, in some cases, even death.

Read more, learn more at: <http://goo.gl/DVwyAa>



USDA begins second year of survey to quantify effects of Ag Conservation

USDA NASS [recently began contacting](#) 25,000 farmers and ranchers to take part in a national survey to more accurately measure the environmental benefits associated with implementation and installation of conservation practices on agricultural land.

The results of the National Resources Inventory Conservation Effects Assessment Project (NRI-CEAP) survey will help further develop the science-based solutions for managing the agricultural landscape to improve environmental quality.

In addition to helping determine the effectiveness of existing conservation practices, NRI-CEAP analysis provides estimates of resources farmers may need to further protect the soil, water and related resources. Additional information about CEAP is available at the [Conservation Effects Assessment Project](#) survey web page.

In Short

NASS recently released land values for Washington cropland and pastureland

Continuing strong growth, Washington farmland increases in value. Overall farm real estate value increased 5.6% to 2,850 and acre.

The average value per acre for Washington cropland was \$2,760 in 2016, an increase of 4.9% from 2015.

Irrigated cropland increased 5.1% over last year to \$8,250.

Non-irrigated increased to \$1,330 an acre, a 3.9% increase from 2015.

Pasture values improved 2.4% to \$840 and acre.

More information at:

<http://goo.gl/F52F6E>

REPORT: USDA Long-term Agricultural Projections to 2025

USDA's long-term agricultural projections are a departmental consensus on a longrun representative scenario for the agricultural sector for the next decade.

The projections are based on specific assumptions about macroeconomic conditions, policy, weather, and international developments, with no domestic or external shocks to global agricultural markets.

Projections cover agricultural commodities, agricultural trade, and aggregate indicators of the sector, such as farm income.

Check out the report for projections:

<http://goo.gl/emOzmc>

Dips in Farm Sector Profitability Expected Into 2016

Farm sector profitability is forecast to decline for the third straight year. Net cash farm income for 2016 is forecast at \$94.1 billion, down 13.3 percent from the 2015 estimate.

Net farm income is forecast to be \$71.5 billion in 2016, down 11.5 percent. If realized, 2016 net farm income would be the lowest since 2009.

Farm asset values are forecast to decline by 2.2 percent in 2016, and farm debt is forecast to decrease by 0.8 percent.

Farm sector equity, the net measure of assets and debt, is forecast down by \$61.2 billion (2.4 percent) in 2016.

Read More: <http://goo.gl/OiHkI6>

Beginning Farmers and Rancher Grant Awards

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced a new investment of \$17.8 million for 37 projects to help educate, mentor, and enhance the sustainability of the next generation of farmers. The investment is made through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP).

Two awards were made to Washington entities; Viva Farms, and Greenbank Farm Management Group for a combined \$1.19 million award. **Learn more by going to:** <http://goo.gl/UO978z>

Greenbank Farm Management Group/Organic Farm School, Greenbank, Wash., \$598,850

This project is focused on finding solutions to the unique challenges beginning farmers and ranchers (BFRs) face on Whidbey Island and the San Juan Islands of Northwest Washington State.

Viva Farms, Mount Vernon, Wash., \$599,999

The goal of this project is to increase the number of sustainable beginning, socially disadvantaged and limited resource farmers by establishing coordinated community partnerships to train, educate, mentor and provide technical assistance.

2016 San Juan County Farm Tours!

What a great time to hit the islands for food, fun, and education! See what's behind the barn doors at the 2016 San Juan County Farm Tours! Tours offer a unique opportunity to visit three dozen farms, shellfish hatcheries, and value added businesses on Lopez, Orcas and San Juan Islands.

Tickets are now on sale! (<http://SJCFarmTours.eventbrite.com>) Tour dates are September 24-25th on San Juan Island, October 2nd on Orcas Island, and October 8-9th on Lopez Island.

The Farm Tours offer a unique opportunity to visit farms, meet farmers, taste locally grown foods, learn skills and understand more about the challenges and opportunities of farming in San Juan County. Join together with community, tour attendees and farmers to feast on the bounty of local harvest.



Attention Washington water resource stakeholders

Led by Washington State Senators Honeyford and Keiser, water resource stakeholders are invited to attend one of two state-level public workshops to provide input on an economic analysis of proposed major water infrastructure and fisheries habitat restoration investments in our state. **PDF of workshop agenda and schedule is available at:** <http://goo.gl/0DSCCO>

Dates: Thursday September 22 (Yakima) and Thursday, September 29 (Lynnwood).

The state Legislature is working to understand the economic consequences of investing – and not investing - in water infrastructure and fisheries habitat across the state. A consultant has been retained on behalf of the state legislature, to gather data and report on these questions. These workshops are your opportunity to participate! They will be presenting preliminary results of a water investment needs assessment for the next 20 years at these workshops, and will be seeking input on two fundamental topics:

1. **Have we captured all the major water infrastructure and fisheries habitat restoration projects that are known to be proposed or likely to be needed in the next 20 years? And,**
2. **How do you interpret the economic opportunities of these investments and the economic consequences of failing to invest in specific projects?**

If you cannot attend but would like to provide input, contact project consultant before October 10th. Contact Rabia Ahmed at rahmed@ramboll.com or Sam Leick at sleick@ramboll.com

Free High School Food System Curriculum

The Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (CLF) has launched an easy-to-use, standards-aligned, 17-lesson food system curriculum for teachers



JOHNS HOPKINS
CENTER for A LIVABLE FUTURE

Food is tied to almost everything we do. It's there when we are celebrating, when we are sad, and increasingly when we are on the go. Yet ask a teen where their cheeseburger or carrot sticks come from and you may be surprised by how little knowledge we are feeding our kids about what they eat.

To fill this gap, the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (CLF) developed [FoodSpan](http://goo.gl/zSalk7), a free downloadable curriculum for grades 9-12. FoodSpan is packed with lessons spanning topics from agriculture to climate change to food safety and access to healthy food. **Learn more here:** <http://goo.gl/zSalk7>

U.S., WA Agriculture Production Costs Sharply Decline in 2015

WASHINGTON, August 4, 2016 – U.S. farmers spent \$362.8 billion on agricultural production in 2015, down 8.8 percent from 2014, reversing a long-term trend of growing costs, according to the Farm Production Expenditures report, published recently by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

Farm Production Expenditures in Washington state are estimated at \$8.42 billion for 2015, down from \$9.32 billion in 2014. This is a 10 percent decrease from last year. Thirteen of the seventeen expenditure categories decreased from 2014. The rent, interest, other farm machinery, and the truck and automobile categories increased in 2015.

The four largest expenditures at the State level account for 58 percent of total expenditures in 2015. These include Labor, 22%; Farm Services, 19%; Feed, 9%; and Rent, 8%.

In 2015, average total farm expenditure per farm in Washington was \$233,889, down from the previous year average of \$253,815. This is higher than the United States farm expenditure average per farm which was \$176,181 in 2015, down 8 percent from the previous year.

The Farm Production Expenditures summary provides the official estimates for production input costs on U.S. farms and ranches. The entire Farm Production Expenditures 2015 summary is available online at <http://bit.ly/FarmExpenditures>.

Read more at: <http://goo.gl/fYutqZ>



In Short

Washington's cooler nights boost flavor of wines

By Nic Loyd, WSU meteorologist, and Linda Weiford, WSU News

A little-known secret of many great-tasting wines made in Washington state is literally the difference between night and day.

Called the diurnal shift, it marks the difference between the highest daytime temperature and the lowest temperature at night. This high-low variance can have a big impact on vineyard grapes during summer months.

Here in the Inland Northwest, the variance is fairly steep. In Yakima, the typical diurnal range is 35 degrees this time of year. In Walla Walla, a town recently described by a New York Times columnist as "Napa in blue jeans," it's 28.

Read more: <http://goo.gl/njj31P>

Wheat Life: The latest CRP general sign-up saw a 40 percent drop in Washington state's acceptance rate. What happened?

Aug/Sept 2016 - By Trista Crossley

For some Eastern Washington producers, the latest conservation sign-up left them holding dust instead of a new contract. In the past few years, Washington state has averaged a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acceptance rate of about 90 percent, but for the 2016 general sign-up, that rate plummeted to approximately 50 percent. In fact, several counties had no acres accepted. The pain was felt across the U.S., where the average acceptance rate was 23 percent.

Read the full story here: <http://goo.gl/vkzdXD>

GRANT: Western SARE Professional Development Program

Western SARE is accepting proposals for Professional Development Program (PDP) competitive grants up to \$75,000. PDP grants help Cooperative Extension Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other agricultural professionals in the Western Region increase their understanding and proficiency in sustainable agriculture.

Proposals are due by November 2, 2016.

Complete details at:

<http://goo.gl/rDbLYC> (PDF)

In Short

Grant: Extension Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program

The Western Extension Risk Management Education Center will announce the 2017 Request For Applications (RFA) on September 15, 2016.

Monitor here for details:

<http://goo.gl/jBifc>

Get a head start by reviewing the PDF of the Request for Applications at:

[2016 Western Center Request For Applications \(RFA\)](#)

2017 RFA Timeline:

November 17, 2016 – Application Deadline

February 17, 2017 – Award Notification

April 1, 2017 – Start Date for Funded Projects

Watching the water supply

August brought some high temperatures to Washington, but things appear to be cooling down. We can expect more moderate weather, which will be welcome news to dry parts of our state.

Here is a look at water supply conditions for agriculture as of Sept 1, 2016:

Most of Washington's agricultural areas experienced a dry and hot August.

Crops are doing well for the most part, but farm ponds and reservoirs are getting low. The large federal reservoirs used for irrigation in the Yakima River Basin are at about normal levels, which is good for farms and fish. Farmers in the Yakima region holding junior water rights are receiving 94 percent of a full water supply. Senior users have 100 percent.

Read more: <http://goo.gl/To1psV>

Washington organic apples – nearly a billion strong!

CSANR WSU - By David Granatstein

It is apple harvest time again in Washington State, albeit about two weeks earlier than normal in most places. This will be a large crop overall, and probably a record crop for organic apples. The projection is for a harvest of just over 11 million 40-pound boxes of organic apples. At 88 apples per box (a typical size), that's over 950 million organic apples. And while this sounds like a lot, if everyone in the US (say, 300 million people) ate one apple a day, that supply would be gone in less than four days. Still, demand is growing by around 10-12% per year, according to the annual surveys done by the Organic Trade Association.

Read more: <http://goo.gl/VvwX7A>

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mark Your Calendars

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Webinar: Household Food Security in the United States in 2015</p> <p>Date: Wednesday, September 7, 2016</p> <p>Time: 8 AM Pacific Time</p> <p>Duration: 1 hour</p> <p>ERS Social Science Analyst Alisha Coleman-Jensen will provide an overview of USDA's annual report on the prevalence and severity of food insecurity in U.S. households in 2015.</p> <p>Register: http://goo.gl/eIqISo</p> | <p>Ties to the Land Succession Planning Workshop's coming up!</p> <p>Learn strategies to maintain family ties to the land from one generation to the next; build awareness of key challenges facing family businesses; and motivating families to address the challenges.</p> <p>Burlington—September 14 & 28</p> <p>Learn more/register: Here</p> <p>Colville—September 17 & Oct 15</p> <p>Learn more/register: Here</p> | <p>Tilth Producer Farm Walks:</p> <p>Whole Farm Conservation Planning, Sunnyside, WA—Sept 19</p> <p>Heavenly Hills Harvest, 764 South Emerald Road, 12:30 PM-4 PM, \$15 members, interns and students, \$25 for non-members.</p> <p>Register here: http://goo.gl/99x5tv</p> |
| <p>7th National Small Farm Conference Sept. 20-22 - Virginia Beach, VA</p> <p>The 7th National Small Farm Conference, "Creating and Sustaining Small Farmers and Ranchers," will take place in September. This conference will consist of short courses, oral and poster paper presentations, exhibits, success stories and educational tours in and around Virginia Beach and the Chesapeake Bay.</p> <p>Details: http://goo.gl/B0c0Cg</p> | <p>Whatcom County Farm Tour Saturday—September 10</p> <p>Multiple farms, 10 AM-5 PM, Free.</p> <p>Head out with family and friends for a chance to see, taste and explore Whatcom County's diverse family-owned farms, on this free, self-guided tour.</p> <p>Details and map available at: https://goo.gl/l8Wjxg</p> | <p>Tilth Annual Conference Wenatchee Conference Center November 11-13:</p> <p>Every year, the Tilth Conference brings together hundreds of farmers, producers, researchers and food system professionals to network and learn. This is a great way to meet others in your field, enjoy locally sourced meals and participate in fun evening events around Wenatchee.</p> <p>Details available by going to: http://goo.gl/DzNJPT</p> |
| <p>Webinar: New Federal Crop Insurance for Organic Farmers—September 14, 2016</p> <p>Crop insurance programs are no longer out of reach for organic and diversified farms! Join this webinar to learn more about new USDA crop insurance resources for organic and diversified farmers.</p> <p>12:00 pm - 1:30 pm</p> <p>More information and registration at: http://goo.gl/JFz3vP</p> | <p>9th Annual Water Rights Transfers CLE—November 9/10—Seminar Available via Live Webcast</p> <p>This seminar is designed to provide information of vital interest to water right holders, developers and advocates.</p> <p>To view full agenda, which includes registration information and pricing, go: http://goo.gl/TEvzjG</p> | <p>5th Annual Easements and CCRs in Washington—Seattle, WA - November 4, 2016 Seminar Available via Live Webcast.</p> <p>Easements are often skimmed over, not discussed and buried someplace in a title report. However, what you don't know can hurt you.</p> <p>To view full agenda, which includes registration information and pricing, go to: http://goo.gl/j4Z0bV</p> |

"OUR MISSION IS TO PROMOTE THE VITALITY OF FARMING, FARMERS, AND RANCHERS BY ENSURING THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN WASHINGTON STATE. WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR, THE LEGISLATURE, THE OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND OTHERS AND BY ENLISTING PUBLIC SUPPORT. PROGRAMS WILL BE VOLUNTARY, RECOGNIZE LOCAL PRIORITIES, AND PROVIDE FOR ECONOMIC INCENTIVES."